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# Lawmakers propose anti-missile systems for all commercial planes

February 9, 2003, 2:58 PM EST

NEW YORK -- Two New York lawmakers on Sunday outlined legislation that would pay for missile protection technology to be installed on all commercial airplanes.

Democrats Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Steve Israel presented a plan that would provide between \$7 billion and \$10 billion to airlines to cover the cost of the technology, which can steer ground-fired missiles away from planes by jamming their guiding systems.

An unsuccessful missile attack on an Israeli jet in Kenya last year raised concerns about the weapons, which are relatively cheap and can hit low-flying aircraft within 3 miles.

"This is a very, very serious danger," Schumer said.

Federal officials have been looking at various options to protect against attacks by the smaller missiles, often called shoulder-held missiles because they can be held by one person and fired from bazooka-like tubes.

The protection technology would cost between \$1 million and \$1.5 million per plane and would take about a week to install in each, Schumer said.

Holly Baker, a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said such technology would have to be certified by the FAA before it could be installed in any planes, and no companies have submitted plans for certification.

Schumer and Israel outlined the bill at a Manhattan press conference where they were joined by Rafi Ron, the former head of security for the Israeli Airport Authority.

The bill, introduced by Schumer, Israel and Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., on Wednesday, also calls for increased security around airports, where the missiles could be launched.

Mark Hatfield, a spokesman for the Transportation Security Administration, said perimeter security has been intensified since the nation was put on heightened terrorist alert on Friday.

"We welcome the assistance and support from the senators and the congressman in this particular area," he said.

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